

## IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL TROUGH TALKING BALL GAME (TBG)

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**Abstract:** The objectives of the research are to find out whether or not Talking Ball Game improves speaking skill and to describe the situation when Talking Ball Game is implemented in the speaking class of the eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 1 Gemolong in the academic year of 2010/2011. It was conducted in 2 cycles. In the first cycle there were four meetings and in the second cycle there were two meetings. This research showed there is improvement in students' speaking skill and situation of the class. For that reason, it is recommended that the English teacher uses this Talking Ball Game so that the students will not get bored and consequently the teaching and learning process can run well and the objectives can be achieved.

**Key words:** speaking skill, Talking Ball Game ,TBG

English is an international language in the world, so it is important for people to learn the language. By learning English as a second language, students are expected to absorb and keep them with the development of science, technology, and art. Of the four language skills, namely; listening, speaking, reading and writing, speaking is a very important skill because it is one of the abilities to carry out conversations in the language (Nunan, 1998: 39). By mastering speaking skill, the learners can carry out conversation with others, give ideas and change the information with interlocutor.

From the observation done by the researcher, lack of students' speaking skill is the biggest problem. Their lack of vocabulary, correct grammar, in addition to unacceptable pronunciation made them unable to say something during the speaking

class. Related to the competence of the students speaking skill, there were some indicators which showed that they did not speak accurately and fluently. First, in English class, they rarely answered the question given by the teacher orally. Second, they also spoke with a lot of long pauses.

Third, they got difficulties to find the appropriate words to create a sentence or expression. Fourth, in grammatical item when the teacher explained narrative text, when she asked the past form of the words *find* and *bring*, the students did not understand.

In addition, the root of the problem is lack of practice. Students' rarely get enough practice in speaking. Other indicators were shown in the classroom atmosphere. During the teaching learning process, the students were not enthusiastic and interested

in joining teaching activities. Only a few students had great willingness to speak up voluntarily.

Besides, another factor causing the students' low speaking skill was their lack of practice. In the class, the students were merely taught by using materials in LKS which focuses in reading and writing. Even though there had been adequate practices on speaking contained in the exercise book, they were never asked to do those practices.

According to Syakur (1987: 5), speaking is a complex skill because at least it is concerned with components of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and fluency. Beside, Gower, Philips, and Walters (1995: 99) said speaking has two different aspects. They are accuracy and fluency.

It can be conclude speaking is a process which demands fluency and accuracy. Speaking fluency can be summarized as the ability to express oneself with the automatic usage of units and patterns of language accurately and by considering the speed of handling utterances appropriately; while speaking accuracy is the use of language by controlling the language system which consists of grammar, vocabulary, and phonology exactly.

Speaking is a crucial part of second language learning and teaching. Despite its importance, for many years, teaching speaking has been undervalued and English language teachers have continued to teach speaking just as a repetition of drills or memorization of dialogues. However, today's world requires that the goal of teaching speaking should improve students' communicative skills, because, only in that way, students can express themselves and

learn how to follow the social and cultural rules appropriate in each communicative circumstance.

According to Jill Hadfield (1996: 4) a game is an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun. He also said that there are two kinds of games: competitive games and co-operative games. A competitive game is games in which the player or teams race to be the first to reach the goal. And co – operative games is games in which players or teams work together towards a common goal. Chen (2005) also said in his journal that the benefits of using games in language learning are promote communicative competence, create a meaningful context for language use, increase learning motivation, reduce learning anxiety, encourage creative and spontaneous use of language.

Teaching speaking is a hard work, especially in teenagers' class. The personalities of students play a large role in determining how quickly and correctly they will accomplish the goal.

Aydan Ersoz said that language learning is hard task which can sometimes be frustrating. He also said well – chosen games are invaluable as they give students a break and at the same time allow students to practice language skill.

Based on the explanation above, it seems clear that games provide an opportunity for intensive language practice, offer a context in which language is used meaningfully. Games are also as a tool for teacher to predict the area of difficulty in teaching and learning process. Games use many kinds of technique, the important reason for using games is simply that they are immensely enjoyable for both teacher and students.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The method used in this research is action research. Kemmis as quoted by Hopkins (1993:44) gives the definition of action research as follows:

“Action research is a form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participators in a social situation (including education) in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practice, (b) their understanding of these practices and (c) the situation in which practices are carried out.”

The model of classroom action research used in this study is based on the model developed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) in Burns (1999:32) who state that action research occurs through a dynamic and complementary process which consists of four fundamental steps in a spiraling process.

The research was conducted in some steps, the detail explanation is as follows: (1) Identifying the problem the researcher as the teacher in this research identified the problem. The problem refers to the students' speaking skill that was still low; (2) planning the action in which the researcher made a

lesson plan about a certain topic, material, media, time, schedule, and instrument for observation; (3) implementing in which the researcher implemented the activities written in the lesson plan; (4) observing in which the researcher recorded the important occurrences during the teaching-learning process after the lesson ;( 4) reflecting in which the researcher evaluated the process and the result of the implementation of TBG in English teaching.

This action research is said to be successful when approximately 75% of students (the object of the research) are able to: (1) speak generally at normal or varying speed to convey their intended meaning and feeling; (2) make only some grammatical error which obscure meaning or few which do not interfere the message; (3) use sufficient and more varied vocabulary to express their ideas and feeling; (4) pronounce familiar or unfamiliar words correctly and comprehensibly.

The scoring of the students' speaking was based on the following rubric:

**Table 1: Scoring Rubrics of Speaking Skill**

No	Indicator	Criteria	Score
1.	Fluency	1. Students' utterance was hesitant and incomplete.	1
		2. Students made long pauses and too much fillers	2
		3. Speaking generally at normal speed	3
		4. Varying speed to convey intended meanings and feelings	4
2.	Grammar	1. Students made occasional grammar slips and	1
		sometimes unable to sustain coherence in longer	2
		utterances.	3

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	2. Making <b>many</b> grammatical errors which obscure meaning	4
	3. Making <b>some</b> grammatical errors which obscure meaning	
	4. Making <b>few</b> grammatical errors which do not interfere with the message	
<hr/>		
3. Vocabulary	1. Using <b>very limited</b> vocabulary to express ideas and feelings	1 2
	2. Using <b>basic</b> vocabulary to express ideas and feelings	3
	3. Using vocabulary <b>sufficient</b> to express ideas and feelings	4
	4. Using <b>more varied</b> vocabulary to express ideas and feelings	
4. Pronunciation	1. Pronouncing <b>familiar and simple</b> words incorrectly and incomprehensibly	1 2
	2. Pronouncing <b>familiar and simple</b> words incorrectly but comprehensibly	3 4
	3. Pronouncing <b>familiar and simple</b> words correctly and comprehensibly	
	4. Pronouncing for both <b>familiar and some unfamiliar</b> words correctly and comprehensibly	

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The data were collected by using quantitative and qualitative method. The qualitative data were collected from observation, questionnaire, voice recording and photographs. While, the quantitative data was collected from the students' speaking score from test (pre-test, post-test 1 and post-test 2).

This research uses the method stated by Burns to analyze the qualitative data. There are five steps and those steps are clear and sequential, they are; assembling the data, coding the data, comparing the data, building interpretations and reporting the outcomes. Then, the quantitative data were analyzed by using descriptive statistic formula.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research findings show that both students' speaking skill and the class situation were improved by implementing TBG.

*1. Talking Ball Game is able to improve students' Speaking Skill.*

As mentioned above, TBG is able to improve their speaking. In this case, implementing TBG to improve students' speaking skill means teaching speaking with the support of Ball. The improvement of students' speaking skill in this research involves two focuses. Each of the improvement is discussed as the research findings as follows:

- a. Talking Ball Game improves students' Fluency.

The research findings show that the students were able to speak fluently. They could minimize their pauses and uses of filler. It was proven by their improving score in fluency from pre-test until post-test 2. Chen supports this finding by his statement “*In a game-oriented context ... and fluency is generated—thus communicative competence is achieved* (Chen, 2005: 1).”

b. Talking Ball Game improves students’ Grammar.

The research findings show that the students made fewer mistakes in grammar. It is shown by their being able to identify the form of grammar. Byrne (1997) says that ...

“Games can be used to provide new context for rapid and enjoyable repetition in many key language areas such as tenses or sets of lexical items on which learners need a massive amount of practice, both for initial and periodic revision.”

c. Talking Ball Game improves students’ Pronunciation

It is shown by the research findings that students’ pronunciation also improved. It can be revealed from their increasing score in the aspect of pronunciation. This is a proof that games can improve the use of corrects speech as stated by Saricoban and Metin that games are task-based and have a purpose beyond the production of correct speech.

d. TBG improves students’ Vocabulary

Students’ use of vocabulary also becomes more various. This is proved by their improving score in the aspect of Vocabulary. This proves what Uberman states in Chen (2005: 1), that by games, students have the opportunity to use language after learning and practicing new vocabulary.

2. *Talking Ball Game is able to improve situation in the English class*

In this research, TBG is also able to improve the situation of the class. In the teaching and learning process, the students took participation when implementing TBG in learning speaking. The improvement of situation in the class covers the following focuses:

a. Talking Ball Game improves students’ interest in English class.

It was proven by students’ behavior who seldom complained when they were asked to complete worksheets dealing with Speaking. They never left the class either. They were always present. It is in line with what Crow and Crow in Kasijan (Susilonuringsih, 2006: 8) say about interest. According to them, interest is an ability to give stimulus prodding us to pay attention to someone, something, or to certain activity which can affect the experience stimulated by the activity. The same idea is also suggested by Lobby Loekmono in Susilonuringsih (2006: 9), who says that interest is the tendency of being attracted or motivated to pay attention to someone, something, or to certain activity. Games are therefore also motivating

b. Talking Ball Game improves students’ activeness.

The research findings show that the students became more active. They were able to answer the teacher’s questions and express their idea spontaneously. They were also willing to give some contribution in the class. Such kind of interaction is one of the indications of students’ activeness. As Brown (1994: 159) says that interaction is “...*the collaborative exchanges of thoughts, feelings,*

*or ideas between two or more people resulting in reciprocal effect on each other.*” From this definition, it can be understood that interaction can be said as happening in the classroom when the teacher and the students can share their ideas and give feedback from one to another. The same idea is presented by Nafrina (2007: 15), saying that interaction is the action performed by the teacher and the students during interrelated instruction.

- c. Talking Ball Game improves students’ behavior during the teaching and learning process.

The research findings show that the students paid attention to the teacher and they did not look bored or make noise. They even looked happy during the lesson. This is going with Tyson (2000: 57) say that “... *a game should encourage students to focus on the use of language rather than on the language itself and should give students a chance to learn, practice, or review specific language material as well.*”

The observation results of field notes which are supported by interview with students and some photographs also show the differences of students’ interest and behaviour

before and after the implementation of TBG. After the researcher conducted the second cycle, he interviewed the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Gemolong. When the teacher asked the students’ feeling, most of them said that TBG is fun activities in speaking class. The students gave more attention and more participation in the game activity. The situation in teaching and learning process became conducive and made the students were able to comprehend and use English expressions more easily.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

As can be seen in previous section, the result of the research shows that TBG can improve the students’ speaking skill and the atmosphere of teaching-learning process becomes more alive. Besides those result findings, there is also the result finding on the teacher behavior that is she knows another technique in teaching speaking.

### 1. *The Improvement of Speaking Skill*

The improvement of students’ speaking skill is indicated by their improving speaking test score. It can be summarized at Table 1 below:

**Table 2. The Improvement of the Students’ Speaking Test Score**

Sub cycle	Observation	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Kind of test	Pre-test	Test 1	Test 2
Mean of students’ score	4.22	6.42	7.27
Increasing of students’ mean score		1.98	0.85

With the more detail improvement of each speaking indicators, the result is presented as follows:

**Table 3. Students' Improvement of Each Speaking Indicator after Cycle 2**

Speaking Indicators	Mean of Score			
	Pre-test	Post-test 1	Post-test 2	Improvement
<b>Fluency</b>	4.13	6.50	7.42	0.92
<b>Grammar</b>	4.54	7.42	8.04	0.62
<b>Vocabulary</b>	4.21	6.15	7.00	0.85
<b>Pronunciation</b>	4.00	5.58	6.63	1.05

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the students had a good achievement at the test in Cycle 2. Their score increased from Cycle 1 to 2.

In conducting the research, the researcher concerned more on three students who came from different level of intelligence. They were a student who has high score in

speaking (student A), one who has average score in speaking (student B), and one who has low score in speaking (student C). The researcher concerned with all the students actually, but he gave special attention to these three students. He gave different attention to them. The improvement of students sample is summarized as follows.

**Table 4. The Sample of Students' Achievement**

Students' initial name	SN (student A)			WE(student B)			UCK(student C)		
	C1	C2	Average	C1	C2	Average	C1	C2	Average
Pre-test	6.88	6.88	6.88	3.13	3.75	3.44	3.13	3.75	3.44
Cycle 1 test	9.38	6.88	8.13	6.25	6.25	6.25	3.13	3.75	3.44
Cycle 2 test	10.00	9.38	9.19	8.13	6.88	7.02	5.63	5.63	5.63
$\Sigma$	26.26	23.14	24.2	17.51	16.88	16.71	11.89	13.13	12.51
Mean	8.75	7.71	8.07	5.84	5.63	5.57	3.96	4.38	4.17

Student A is a student who has high score in speaking. She got the higher score in pre-test and reached higher score on post-tests. She made the least mistakes in each aspect of speaking. She actively contributed to the class.

Student B is a student in average score in speaking. She is not too clever but active. She spoke fluently but sometimes mispronounced words. But her comprehension on vocabulary meaning is good. During the research, the researcher

From the explanation, it can be concluded that the sample students got

drilled him how to pronounce words appropriately.

Student C is a student with low score in speaking. She is so calm and passive. During the research; the researcher gave her special attention. The researcher also motivated and encouraged her in order to be better in learning. Through TBG, he got more active in the class. As the result; she got better score in the post-test. Her score improved significantly.

improved their skill of speaking. It is shown by the score they achieved and also the behavior they showed.

## 2. *The Improvement of Class Situation*

### a. The Improvement of Students' Interest and Activity in the Class

Using TBG, the teacher provides activities that involve students' active participation. The nature of game, which is fun, had attracted them to be involved in the activity. This engaged the students so that they were in to the materials taught. Besides, the atmosphere during the implementing of TBG also improved. The improvement could be seen in the terms of their participation in answering question, asking the teacher if they got difficulties, paying attention to the teacher explanation, and increasing their motivation to learn.

TBG also made the teaching learning process become enjoyable and fun and their courage improved. Based on the discussion of the result findings of the research in the previous chapter, the researcher concluded that the use of TBG is able to improve the students' speaking skill and make the atmosphere of the class become more alive.

### b. The improvement of the Teacher's Behavior

By conducting the research, the researcher could show the teacher, who used traditional method and text book to teach speaking before, how she used TBG attractively to teach the students. Besides, she got closer to the students and the interaction between them increased too.

### c. The improvement of the Students' Behavior

The improvement was the students greeted and called the researcher's name when

the students met her, as what had been said by one of them, "*Miss Shinta, nanti main lagi ya*". It can be concluded that the students gave positive attitude towards the research.

Based on the analysis above, it can be interpreted that using TBG can improve the students' speaking skill of the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Gemolong. It also makes the English class situation more interesting, interactive and not boring.

Based on the conclusion of this research, it can be shown that after implementing the research, there are improvements of students' speaking proficiency (covering accuracy and fluency), the students' behavior during the TL process, and the class atmosphere. The use of Talking Ball Games helps the students to comprehend the vocabulary and grammar. Finally, they can use the vocabulary, grammar and the expression in real communication. Talking Ball Games can make the students think intensively and concentrate in learning process. By so doing, they will able to express their idea, think naturally. Talking Ball Games increase creativity and courage; they have more discussion with their friends. It also increases their enthusiasts to ask the teacher about their difficulties. Talking Ball Games create fun learning situation, therefore it either makes the students enjoy or become more involved in their learning. In other words it reduces their anxiety in learning and increase learning motivation. The competition in TBG can stimulate and encourages them to participate in the activity since naturally they want to beat with other teams. This study can be as a reference for the teacher in improving the quality in applying the effective technique toward improving the students' learning



motivation and achievement in learning English.

After concluding the result of the research, the researcher would like to propose some suggestions for English teachers, students, school, English department and other researcher. For English teacher, the teacher can use TBG in teaching in order to make the students more motivated, communicative, and active in joining the lesson. It is important to the teacher to create an enjoyable situation of teaching learning process in order to make them eager to improve their English. For student, since the technique of TBG needs students' participation, they have to be active in teaching learning. It has been proven that this technique can improve the students' speaking skill. Besides, they should encourage themselves to learn more, to ask what they do not know, and to learn as much as possible. For school, the school needs to provide the aids for speaking activities, for example some balls to apply Talking Ball Game. For The English Department of FKIP UNS, English Department should encourage the students to conduct an action research in fulfilling one of the requirements to get undergraduate degree of English education, because it is an effective strategy for them to be professional teacher. Finally, for other researchers it is expected that the findings of this research will be used as an additional reference for further research in different context which will give valuable contribution to teaching and learning English.

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